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JORGE CORONA
MIKE SPICER
TRANSFORMERS
image
#22

ENERGON UNIVERSE

TRANSFORMERS

ISSUE TWENTY-TWO

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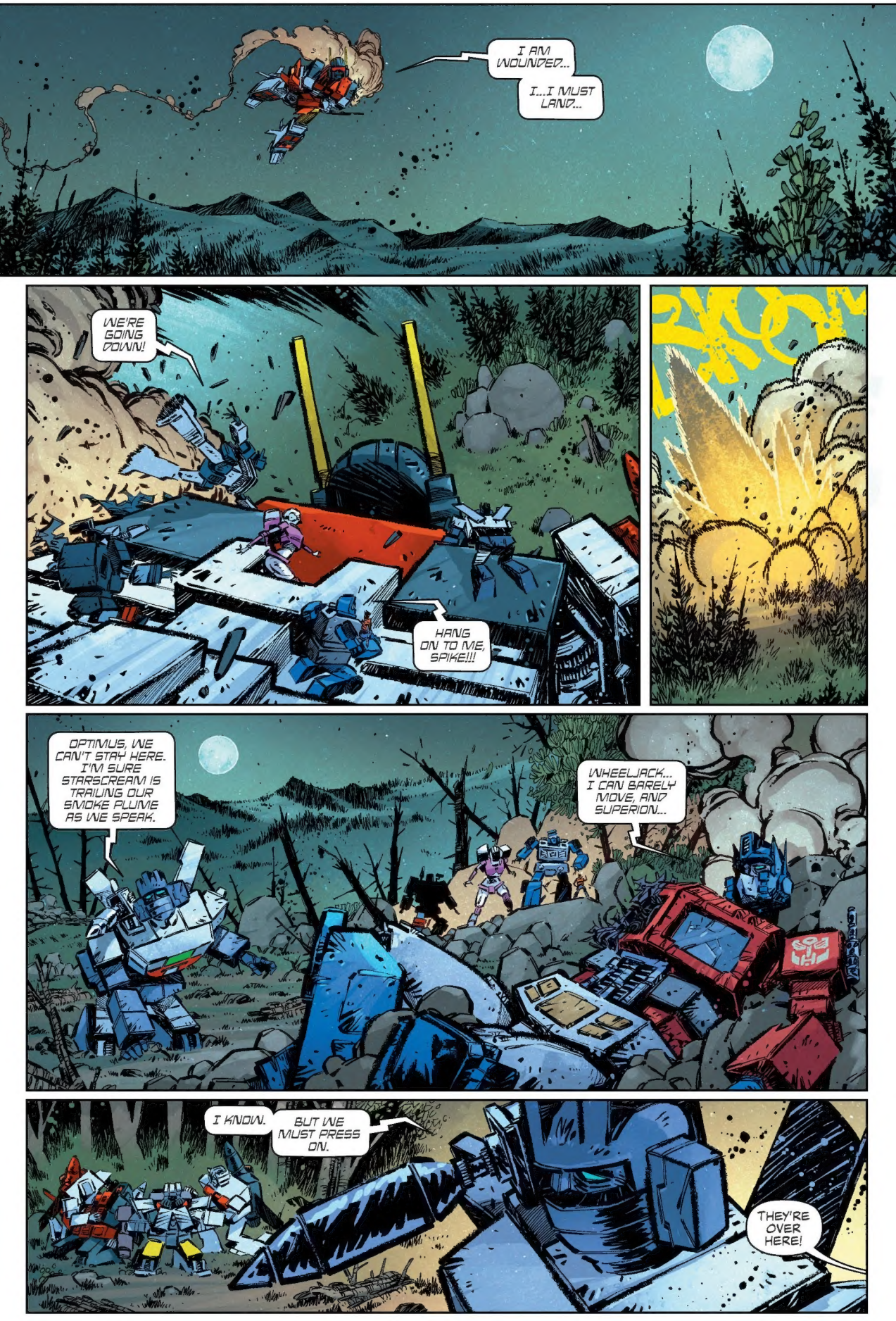
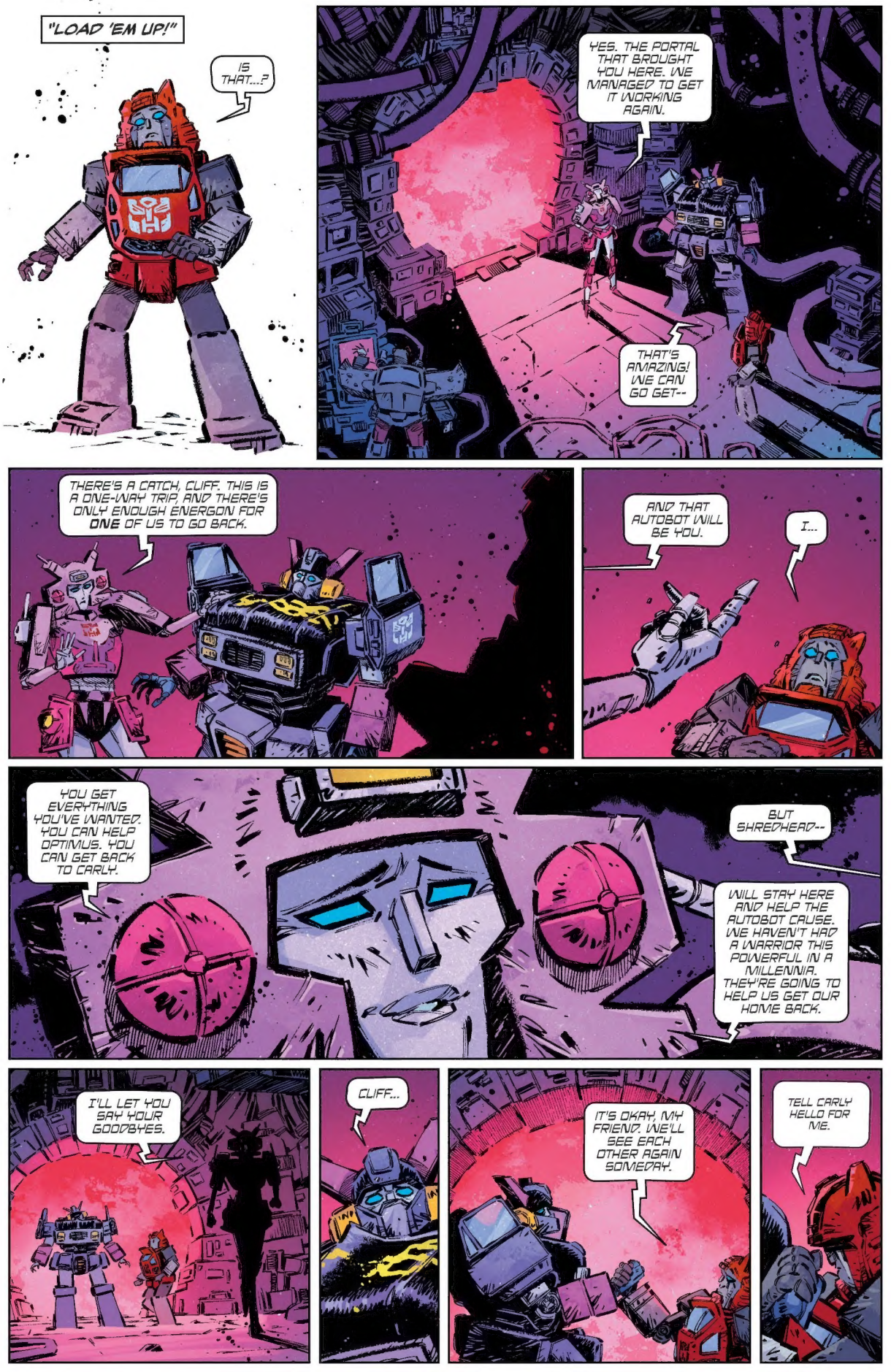
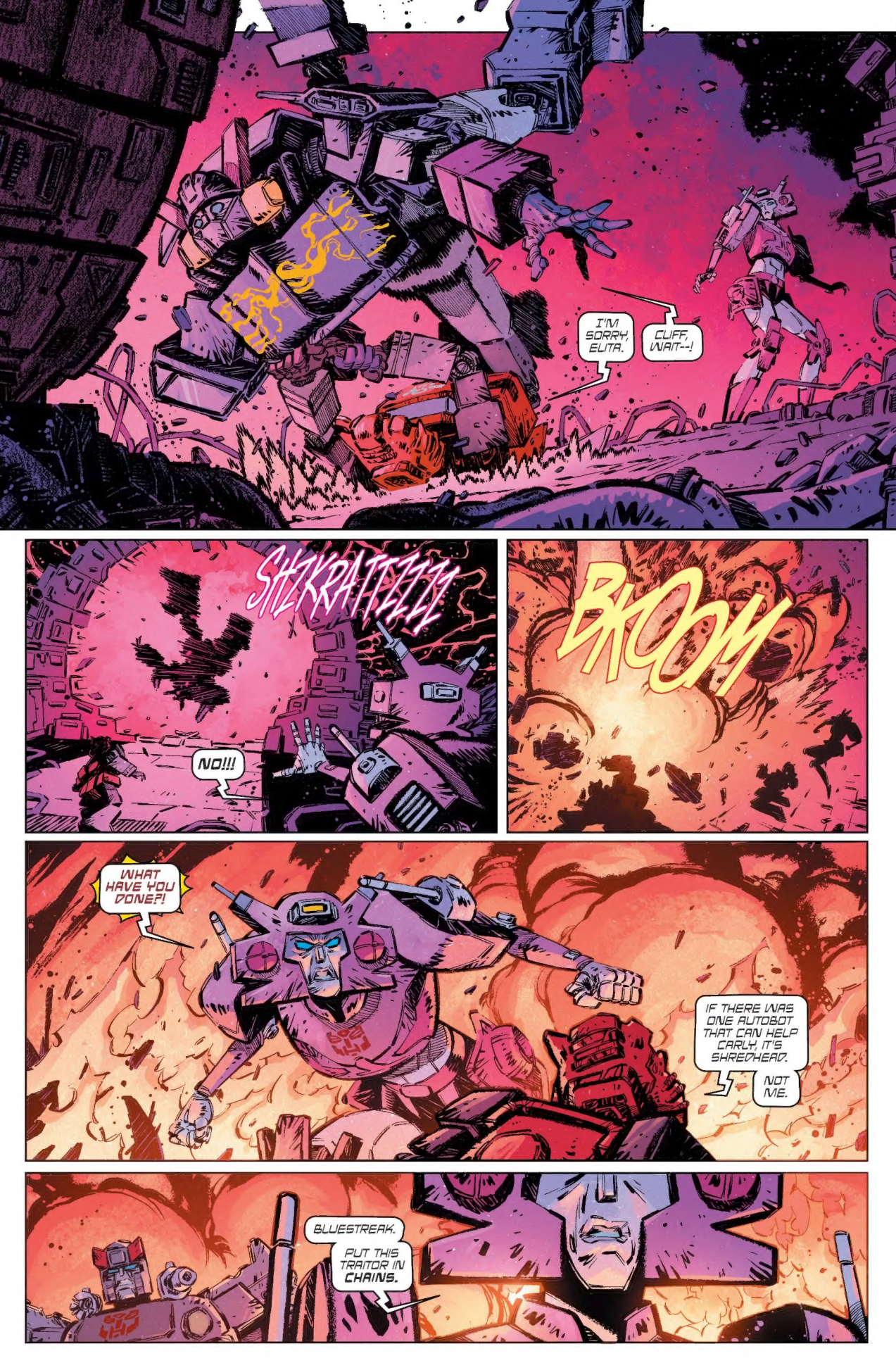
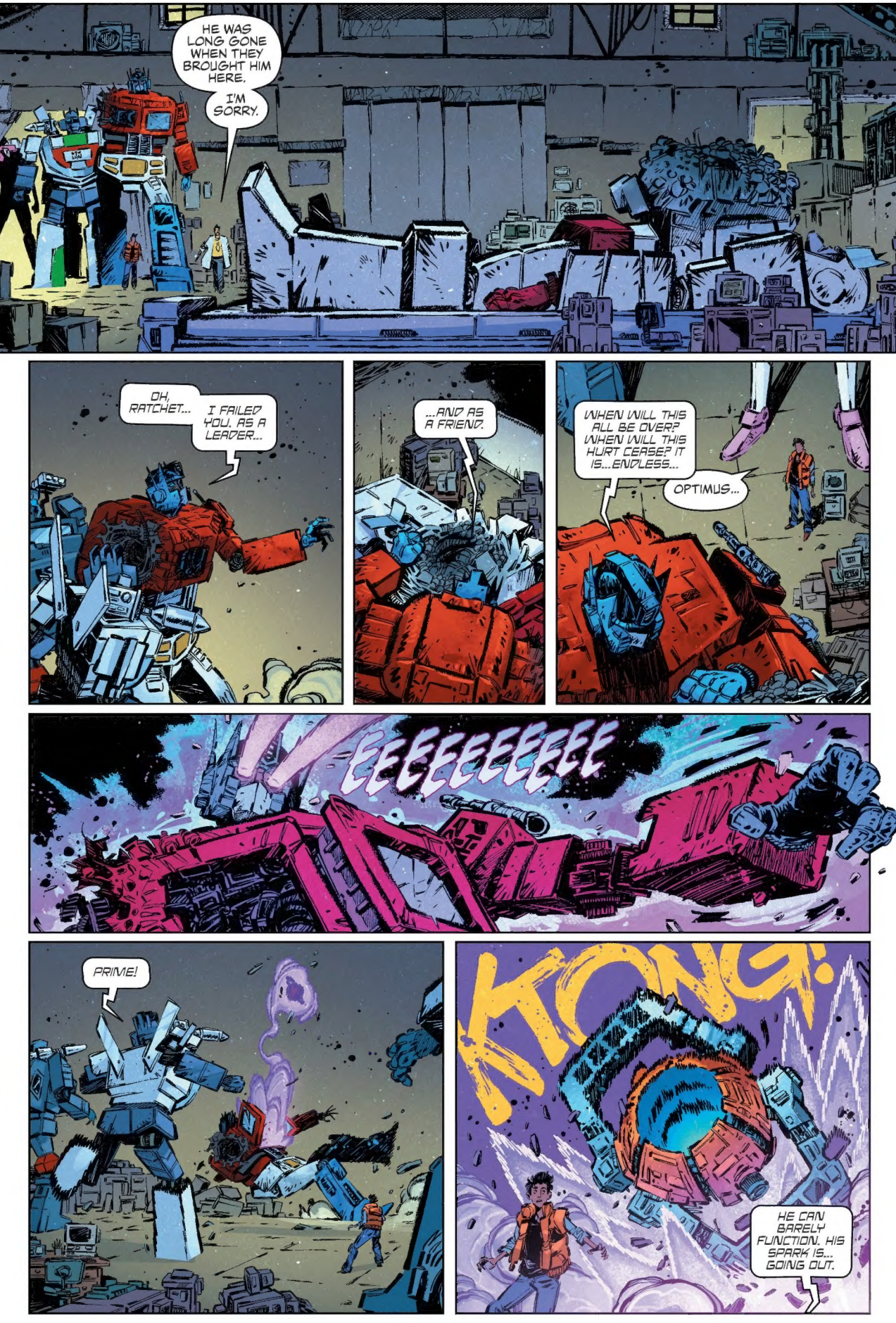

I AM WOUNDED...
I...I MUST LAND...
WE'RE GOING DOWN!
HANG ON TO ME, SPIKE!!!
OPTIMUS, WE CAN'T STAY HERE. I'M SURE STARSCREAM IS TRAILING OUR SMOKE PLUME AS WE SPEAK.
WHEELJACK... I CAN BARELY MOVE, AND SUPERION...
I KNOW.
BUT WE MUST PRESS ON.
THEY'RE OVER HERE!

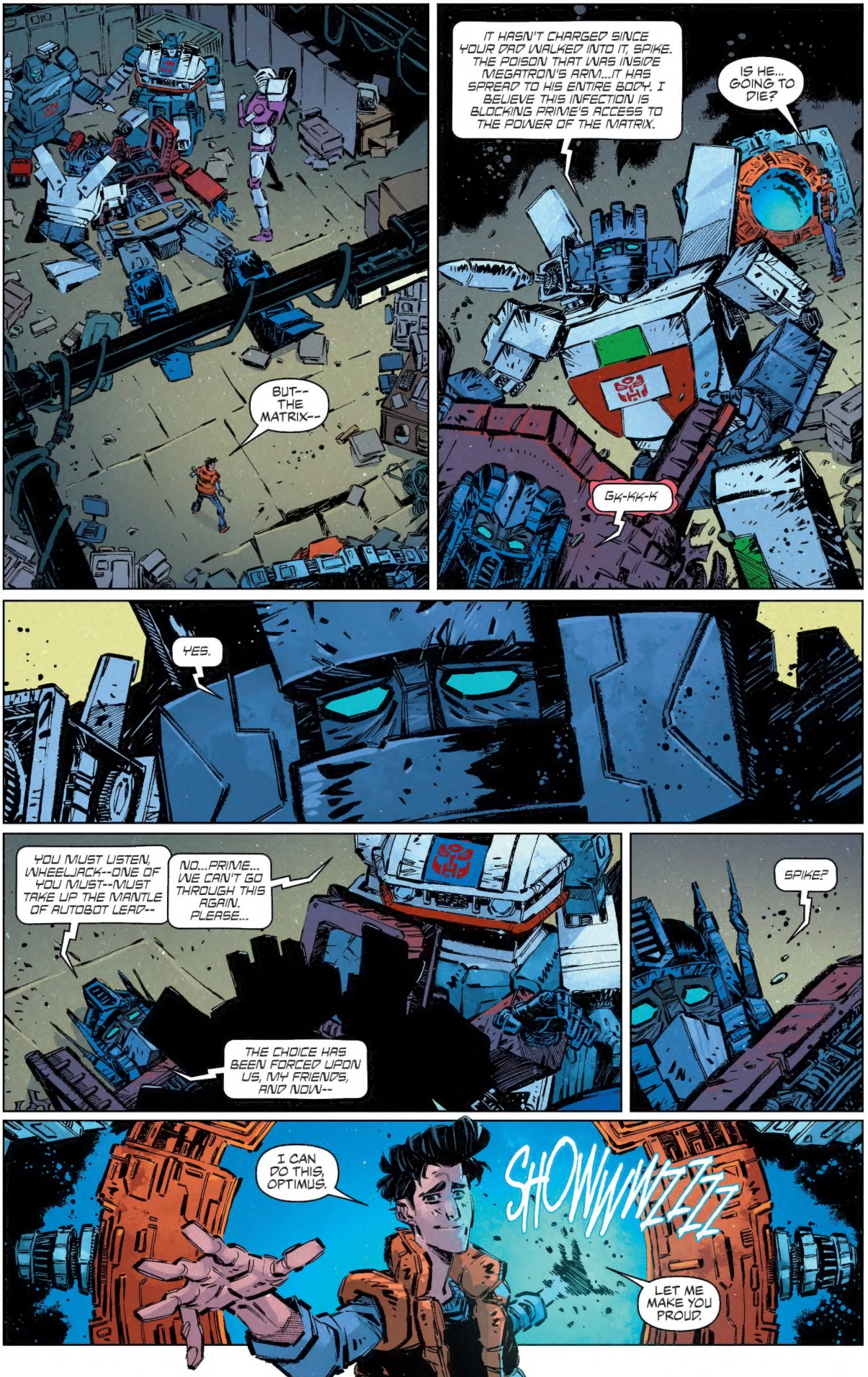
VRRRRRRRRRR
FINALLY FOUND 'EM!
WE MEAN YOU NO HARM! DON'T SHOOT--!
DR. LIO...?
PLEASE LISTEN! IT'S ALL RIGHT!
WHEN THE ROBOTS ATTACKED MY HOSPITAL...YOU SAW ALL MY PATIENTS... PEOPLE THAT NEEDED HELP. YOU WERE THERE FOR THEM.
IT'S OUR TURN NOW.
YOU HEARD THE DOC!


"LOAD 'EM UP!"
IS THAT...?
YES. THE PORTAL THAT BROUGHT YOU HERE. WE MANAGED TO GET IT WORKING AGAIN.
THAT'S AMAZING! WE CAN GO GET--
THERE'S A CATCH, CLIFF. THIS IS A ONE-WAY TRIP, AND THERE'S ONLY ENOUGH ENERGON FOR ONE OF US TO GO BACK.
AND THAT AUTOBOT WILL BE YOU.
I...
YOU GET EVERYTHING YOU'VE WANTED. YOU CAN HELP OPTIMUS. YOU CAN GET BACK TO CARLY.
BUT SHREDHEAD--
WILL STAY HERE AND HELP THE AUTOBOT CAUSE. WE HAVEN'T HAD A WARRIOR THIS POWERFUL IN A MILLENNIA. THEY'RE GOING TO HELP US GET OUR HOME BACK.
I'LL LET YOU SAY YOUR GOODBYES.
CLIFF...
IT'S OKAY, MY FRIEND. WE'LL SEE EACH OTHER AGAIN SOMEDAY.
TELL CARLY HELLO FOR ME.


I'M SORRY, ELITA.
CLIFF, WAIT--!
SHZKRAIIIZZ
NO!!!
BROOM
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
IF THERE WAS ONE AUTOBOT THAT CAN HELP CARLY, IT'S SHREDHEAD.
NOT ME.
BLUESTREAK.
PUT THIS TRAITOR IN CHAINS.

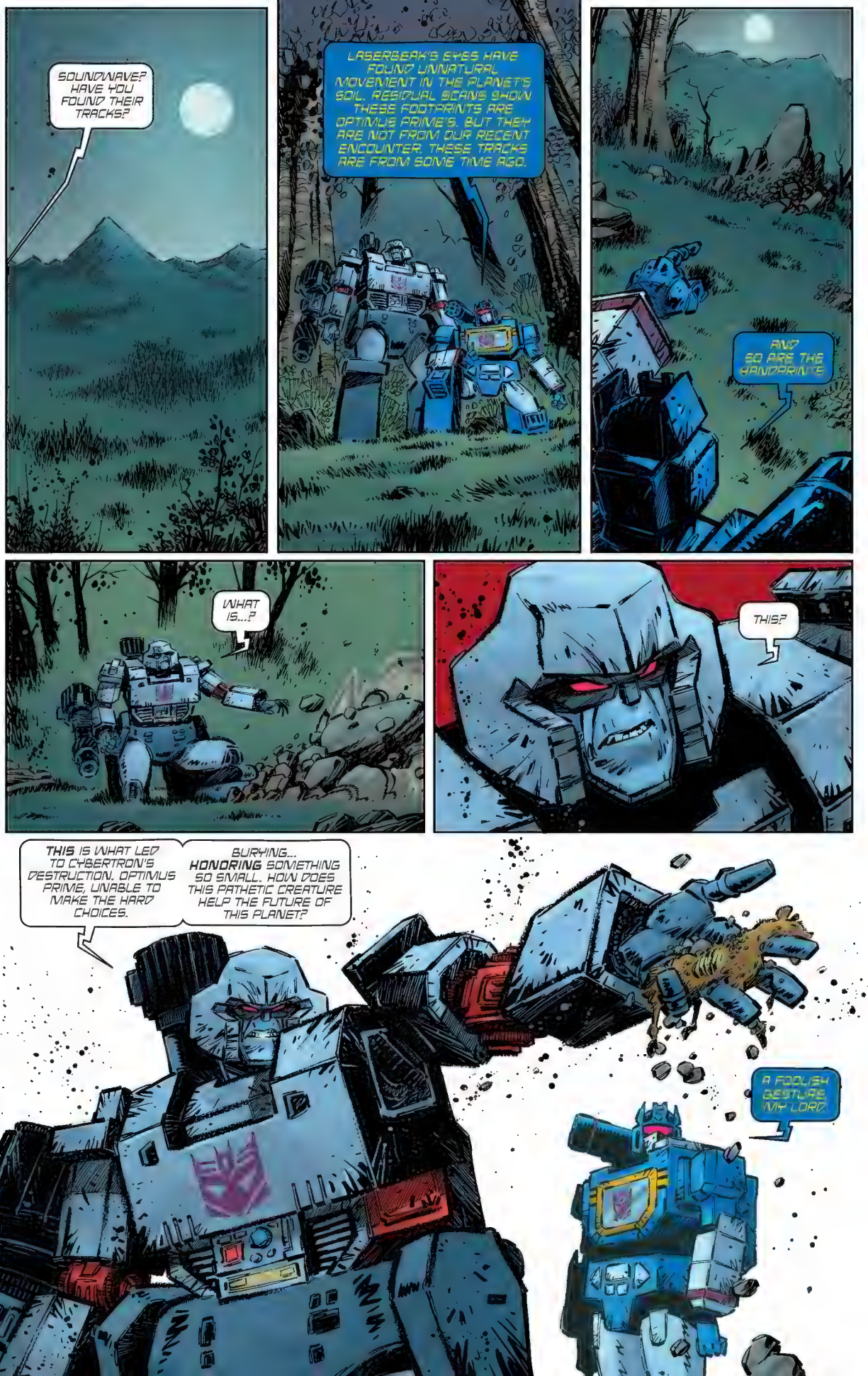
WHEELJACK... WHERE ARE WE?
LOOKS LIKE YOUR ENDLESS KINDNESS FINALLY PAID OFF. WE'RE GETTING A RIDE.
WE CAN'T ACCEPT THIS-- ANYWHERE WE GO COULD BE A DECEPTICON TARGET. INNOCENT LIVES ARE IN--
OPTIMUS, PLEASE. WE NEED HELP.
I THINK WE SHOULD TAKE IT WHEREVER WE CAN GET IT RIGHT NOW.
EMERGENCY! EMERGENCY.
WE'RE PUTTING YOU IN THE BACK TENTS WHERE WE'VE SAVED SOME ROOM FOR YOU ALL.
I DON'T KNOW THAT WE CAN HELP FIX YOU, BUT AT LEAST YOU'LL BE HIDDEN.
DOCTOR...THE RISKS YOU TAKE FOR US...WE CANNOT ACCEPT.
LET ME DO MY JOB FOR YOU AS BEST I CAN.
ALSO, YOU SHOULD KNOW-- THE COAST GUARD FOUND SOMETHING IN THE OCEAN.


HE WAS LONG GONE WHEN THEY BROUGHT HIM HERE.
I'M SORRY.
OH, RATCHET...
I FAILED YOU. AS A LEADER...
...AND AS A FRIEND.
WHEN WILL THIS ALL BE OVER? WHEN WILL THIS HURT CEASE? IT IS...ENDLESS...
OPTIMUS...
EEEEEEEEEE
PRIME!
KONG!
HE CAN BARELY FUNCTION. HIS SPARK IS... GOING OUT.


BUT-- THE MATRIX--
IT HASN'T CHARGED SINCE YOUR DAD WALKED INTO IT, SPIKE. THE POISON THAT WAS INSIDE MEGATRON'S ARM...IT HAS SPREAD TO HIS ENTIRE BODY. I BELIEVE THIS INFECTION IS BLOCKING PRIME'S ACCESS TO THE POWER OF THE MATRIX.
IS HE... GOING TO DIE?
GK-KK-K
YES.
YOU MUST LISTEN, WHEELJACK--ONE OF YOU MUST--MUST TAKE UP THE MANTLE OF AUTOBOT LEAD--
NO...PRIME... WE CAN'T GO THROUGH THIS AGAIN. PLEASE...
THE CHOICE HAS BEEN FORCED UPON US, MY FRIENDS, AND NOW--
SPIKE?
I CAN DO THIS, OPTIMUS.
SHOWWIZZ
LET ME MAKE YOU PROUD.

SPIKE, NO!!!
SHWA
SHWOOOZZZ
ZZZOWWWWWW
SHWOWWWWWW

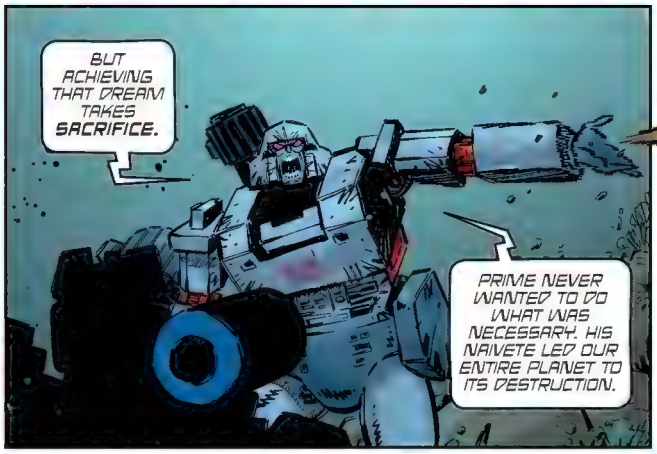
IT...IT CAN'T BE.
THE HALL OF THE PRIMES.

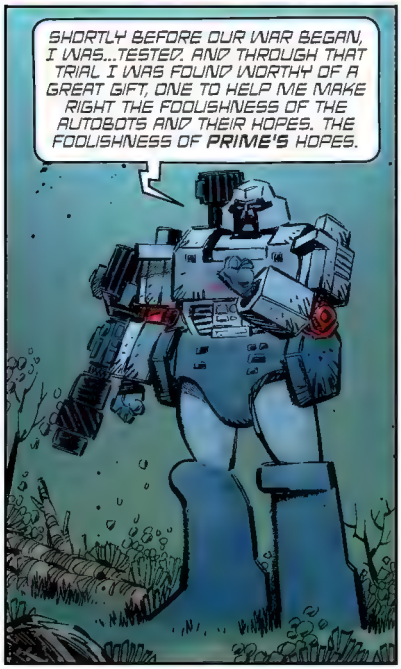

SOUNDWAVE? HAVE YOU FOUND THEIR TRACKS?
LASERBEAK'S EYES HAVE FOUND UNNATURAL MOVEMENT IN THE PLANET'S SOIL. RESIDUAL SCANS SHOW THESE FOOTPRINTS ARE OPTIMUS PRIME'S. BUT THEY ARE NOT FROM OUR RECENT ENCOUNTER. THESE TRACKS ARE FROM SOME TIME AGO.
AND SO ARE THE HANDPRINTS
WHAT IS...?
THIS?
THIS IS WHAT LED TO CYBERTRON'S DESTRUCTION. OPTIMUS PRIME, UNABLE TO MAKE THE HARD CHOICES.
BURYING... HONORING SOMETHING SO SMALL. HOW DOES THIS PATHETIC CREATURE HELP THE FUTURE OF THIS PLANET?
A FOOLISH GESTURE, MY LORD.

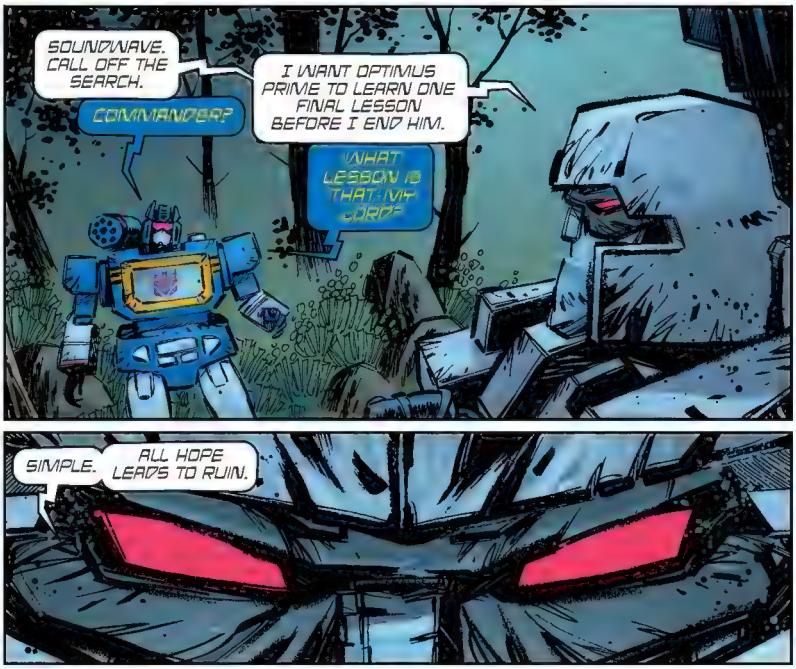
DO NOT MISTAKE MY WORDS, SOUNDWAVE. EVEN I CAN SEE HOW AMAZING THIS PLANET IS. ITS BEAUTY REMINDS ME OF OUR HOME. HOW IT USED TO BE.
I REMEMBER ITS GLORY WELL.

ALL I HAVE **EVER** WANTED WAS TO BRING OUR PLANET BACK TO THAT HARSH, ANGULAR SPLENDOR.

SQUISH


BUT ACHIEVING THAT DREAM TAKES **SACRIFICE.**
PRIME NEVER WANTED TO DO WHAT WAS NECESSARY. HIS NAIVETE LED OUR ENTIRE PLANET TO ITS DESTRUCTION.


SHORTLY BEFORE OUR WAR BEGAN, I WAS...TESTED. AND THROUGH THAT TRIAL I WAS FOUND WORTHY OF A GREAT GIFT, ONE TO HELP ME MAKE RIGHT THE FOOLISHNESS OF THE AUTOBOTS AND THEIR HOPES. THE FOOLISHNESS OF **PRIME'S** HOPES.


SOUNDWAVE. CALL OFF THE SEARCH.
COMMANDER?
I WANT OPTIMUS PRIME TO LEARN ONE FINAL LESSON BEFORE I END HIM.
WHAT LESSON IS THAT, MY LORD?
SIMPLE.
ALL HOPE LEADS TO RUIN.

"ALL RIGHT, BOYS AND GIRLS."
THIS IS THE BIG ONE. SOUND OFF.
EAGLE THREE HERE, READY TO ROLL.
EAGLE TWO, RIGHT BEHIND YA, COMMANDER.
BEN
EAGLE FIVE, FEELS GOOD TO BE ALIVE, BABY.
HOOAHHH!!!
GO GET EM!!!
GIVE EM HELL!!!!
HEARD THAT, EAGLE FIVE. EAGLE GROUP, PREPARE MISSILE LOCK.
YEAHHHHHHH!!!!
LET'S DO THIS FOR FROSTING--

KKFKROOMMMM
HAHAHAHA!
WE ARE THE UNSTOPPABLE FORCE. WE ARE YOUR NEW MASTERS. WE ARE DECEPTICONS.
AND WHEN YOU FINALLY BEND THE KNEE...
YOU WILL THANK US FOR THE PRIVILEGE!
SMALL! WEAK! FEEBLE!
BLOW BLOW BLOW
KKOOWWW
KKOWWW
KROOOM
AIEEEE!!!
KKOOOSHH
LIGHT 'EM UP!!!

ZOWZOWZOW
I CAN'T SHAKE HIM! I CAN'T--
BKG
L-LOOK OUT!!!
FIFTEEN! SIXTEEN!
SEVENTEEN! EIGHTEEN!
STOMP! STOMP! STOMP!
OH! OH! THE TANKS COUNT AS... ONETWOTHREE-FOURFIVE!!! TWENTY-THREE!!
PATHETIC! I AM AT THIRTY-SEVEN!
WHAT??!
THEN MY KILLING MUST CONTINUE!!!
"I KEEP TELLING YOU, I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING."

COME ON NOW, CARLY. DON'T BE LIKE THAT. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, YOUR FATHER WAS THE FIRST HUMAN TO BE KILLED BY THESE THINGS. SURELY, YOU MUST HAVE SOME INSIGHTS. WEAKNESSES. GOALS.
I GOT TO KNOW THEM, YEAH. BUT...I DIDN'T LEARN ANYTHING SPECIAL. THERE'S GOOD ONES. THERE'S BAD ONES. THEY NEED FUEL, JUST LIKE US. THEY CAN BE KILLED, JUST LIKE US. THEY'RE JUST...BIGGER.
CAN I GO NOW?
AND WHERE ARE YOU GOING TO GO? HOME? YOU'RE NOT UNDERSTANDING THE GRAVITY OF THE SITUATION. THE WEST COAST IS FALLING.
WHAT... DO YOU MEAN?
TACOMA IS A WASTELAND. SEATTLE IS UNDER ATTACK AS WE SPEAK. THE PRESIDENT HAS ORDERED MASS EVACUATIONS. IT'S TIME TO CHOOSE A SIDE, CARLY. HELP US PROTECT YOU. HELP US PROTECT THIS BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY.
WHAT, PROTECT IT LIKE BOMBING ORCAS ISLAND, GENERAL FLAGG?
YEAH RIGHT.

SHNFOKKKKLLL
AGAIN, PLEASE.
GHHHKKKK--
GOOD, GOOD.
UH, DOC?
W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
THE RIGHT THING, SOLDIER.
BUT--
IT'S ALL RIGHT. I'M NOT GOING TO HURT YOU. I'M NOT GOING TO HURT ANYONE.
BUT I DO HAVE TO HELP SOMEONE.

SKREEEEEK
UH-- THAT'S NOT SUPPOSED TO HAP--
RRM
AWEEEEAWEEEEAWEEEE
SOLDIER! REPORT! WHAT THE HELL IS GOING--
SECURITY BREACH, SIR! IT'S COMING THIS WAY! IT'S--
SKREEEEEE

BOOM
RATTATATTATTA
CARLY!
STOP THAT ROBOT!!!
WHOAH!
KKKKOMMM
YOU CAN LEAVE ME HERE. I'VE GOT TO FACE CONSEQUENCES FOR WHAT I JUST DID.

WHO THE HECK IS THIS GUY?
WHY?
WHY DID YOU FREE ME?
I WAS WHERE YOU WERE ONCE. A CAPTIVE. TORTURED.
HOW DO YOU STAND NOW?
HOW DO YOU LIVE?
I...I HAVE PEOPLE THAT NEED ME. THEY KEEP ME GOING.
DON'T YOU HAVE ANYONE LIKE THAT?
KHEE KOKOKAH KHEE
YES.
I DO.
"ANY CHANGE, DOCTOR?"

NONE THAT I CAN SEE. STILL BREATHING FINE, VITALS STABLE. BUT THAT HAND STILL WON'T COME OUT. HOW ABOUT OPTIMUS?
THE EXACT. IT'S LIKE HE'S CAUGHT IN SOME SORT OF DREAM HE CAN'T WAKE UP FROM.
DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THIS TECH?
ALL I KNOW IS THAT CYBERTRONIANS ARE THE ONLY BEINGS TO EVER HAVE INTERACTED WITH THE MATRIX BEFORE. SPARKY GOING INSIDE...CHANGED IT.
MAYBE WE NEVER UNDERSTOOD IT WELL ENOUGH IN THE FIRST PLACE.
WHERE ARE WE GOING, DOCTOR?
THE GOVERNMENT IS TRANSMITTING OVER ALL THE RADIO CHANNELS. THEY'RE TELLING US TO GO EAST AS FAST AS WE CAN.
WHAT'S EAST?
"THE WINDY CITY.
"WE'RE MAKING OUR FINAL STAND IN CHICAGO."
TO BE CONTINUED!

THE MATRIX OF LETTERSHIP

SEND LETTERS TO
TRANSFORMERS@SKYBOUND.COM

Welcome back to another senses shattering installment of the Matrix of Lettership and what a soul-crushing issue! I've said a few times over the course of this letter column that things are always looking bleak for the Autobots...but, phew, it feels like the end is nigh! Joining me, as always, is the Master of Puppets himself, Daniel Warren Johnson!

Many people have asked me when our poor, beautiful Autobots are going to get a break...and to them I say: NEVER! Just kidding. But yeah, not good. Let's hope some victories come the good guys' way soon!

All right, let's see what letters we have this month!

Hello Transformers team,

I'm a huge sucker for trope juxtapositions, and Issue #20 really delivered. On the one hand, you have Optimus consoling Spike about his father, then using the Autobots' energon reserves to revive the Aerialbots--who, with their weaker sparks, almost feel like Optimus's children in that moment It's tender and powerful. Meanwhile, Megatron is the complete opposite--zero chill. He repairs Starscream just so he can beat the energon out of him, and once he's done, he turns his fury on Astrotrain, ultimately killing him in one of the most brutal ways we've seen. I'm really hoping that when we finally get to Optimus vs. Megatron, we get some epic wrestling-style action ala rock bottoms or one winged angels. Can't wait! Hope to catch you again at SDCC!

Thanks,
Gilbert Reyes

Thanks for writing in, Gilbert! And I, too, loved the juxtapositions you noted when I read the script--and Jorge and Mike's execution on art with both was literally perfect.

Thanks for saying that about the Aerialbots, Gilbert! I modeled that scene after one of my favorite comics of all time, Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind. There's a scene where Nausicaa gathers her fellow soldiers all around her in a large group hug. Thank you, Miyazaki!

And Megatron doing a one winged angel??? Now THERE'S an idea!

Hello TRANSFORMERS Team!

I have just read issue #19--takes a while to get them shipped to Germany--and man, MAN is this run of Transformers something! When I saw Devastator and Bruticus have their kaiju-esque battle, I cheered. Why are gigantic robots punching each other so awesome?

You've already knocked down quite a few niche characters I liked, like my poor guy Reflector, but now you have given me yet another and I can't wait to groan when he gets killed, too. BLADES, PLEASE SURVIVE!! You give me hope to see Defensor! I am looking at my little 1986 First Aid toy as I write this...

Great work so far, I can't wait to see where you guys will lead us. My artist hands are already itching to redraw some of these panels.

Much love from Germany!
Thunderwave

I'm so thrilled you're getting our series in Germany...and you want Blades to survive? Hmmm...

All I can say is, I LOVE DEFENSOR!!!

Bah Weep Graaaagnah Wheep Ni Ni Bong!

I just read #20 and DWJ, you're killing it, man. As a fan of the Bots & Cons since '84, I've witnessed every comic, show, iteration & reboot and I can definitely say your run is in the top 5 of all time. You know the characters very well. Megatron rebuilding Screamer just to beat on him? Masterful choice, sir. BTW, was that chair they used the same tech as the CR chambers in Beast Wars?

On the note of rebuilding and not rebuilding characters, our friends on the Triple Takeover Podcast posed a great question I also have. You've made a point of taking characters off the board to convey dramatic stakes. In that same vein, have you or Robert ever considered mixing up Combiner teams out of plot necessity? The Takara toy concept for the Scramble City Combiners allowed the toys to be swapped with each other, so what if after teams suffer casualties the survivors unite to form a new Combiner??? I know, I'm thinking waaaaay too far into the future…

DWJ, thanks for 24 incredible issues!!! We're going to miss you!

Mark J. Schultis
Dean of EUU - Energon Universe University

Thanks for writing in, Mark! Always good to hear from the Dean...and I kind of

LOVE that idea for a mixed Combiner, I'll have to google Scramble City. I do wonder how that would work with the collective Combiner personality, hmm...

This is an amazing idea! I wish I had thought of that! Thank you for writing in and for your kind words, Mark!

Hi Skybound editorial team,

I just recently finished issue 20 of this amazing comic and I loved every little bit of it. I really enjoyed the fact that Megatron just showed and put Astrotrain, as well as Starscream, in their place. While I am a tad sad to see Astrotrain go, it really shows how powerful Megatron is. Even though he's missing his optics and an arm, he beat down Astrotrain like a monster

I love Astrotrain, too, so yeah, I'm sad as well. BUT MEGATRON HAD TO HAVE HIS WAY!

As for Starscream, it's kind of funny to see Megatron heal him only to punch him in the face seconds later. Spike and Optimus having a sit-down talk is also nice to see along with the Aerialbots and Jetfire showing up.

I do also have some questions, though:

1. Will the other two Energon Universe comics if ever cross over with Transformers main story?

Above my pay grade! But I sure hope so!

2. When will the Dinobots show up? I know that there's a lot of characters right now but will they make their way into the Energon Universe soon?

I cannot answer this, but I can say that Grimlock is in my top five Transformers ever.

3. Who is your favorite Beast Wars character?

Optimus Primal obviously, tied with Optimal Optimus. I am basic I know.

4. With Megatron currently being in pieces, will he be healed before the fight with Optimus?

I think by this issue you'll see for yourself!

5th and final question, have you ever considered bringing any Japanese G-1 characters into the Energon Universe?

I was thinking about it, but there were already so many amazing characters to choose from in the original series. That's not to say there won't be characters showing up down the line from later eras of TF, but as for now, what you're seeing is mostly what you're getting.

Thank you for this amazing series and to keep me looking forward to the coming months. Sidenote, in the Energon Universe Special Jazz kind of got his one shot and it was a nice fun little story.

Kolton

Thanks for the letter, Kolton! Appreciate your support and that Jazz short story might be one of my favorite E.U. stories yet!

Hi Transformers team

This is my first time sending a letter to a comic book letters page and after reading issue 20 I felt it's time...

This comic series is really special to me, it got me back into Transformers and it brought me back to buying monthly comics. It got one of my close friends into this wonderful franchise. I love most every aspect of this comic it's just amazing, everything from the mind-blowing art to the covers to my favorite version of Optimus Prime, period, and all the wrestling moves. With all that being said:

NOT ASTROTRAIN ANYONE BUT HIM, this is a great tragedy. I'd say the most tragic death in comic book history! This series made me such a fan of the character for Megatron to have him killed in such a way, I've never wanted prime to defeat Megatron more than I do as of this issue he needs to be stopped no matter the cost

Keep up the stellar work,
Chase Thomsen

Congratulations on your first printed letter, Chase! And dang, sorry about Astrotrain...his fate really shook more people than I honestly expected!

He's a fan fave, Ben! Myself included! I did not take killing him lightly!

Till all are one, my friends!

-DWJ

And that's a wrap for another killer issue! Tune in next month for when things get REALLY INSANE!

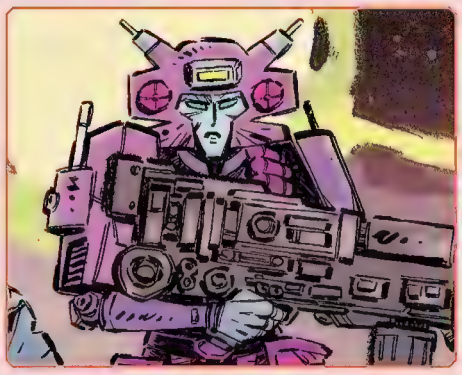
-Ben

ENERGON EXPERIENCE

Since we announced this TRANSFORMERS series two years ago, we were always headed here--to an EPIC Autobots vs. Decepticons throwdown in the Windy City!

Could we have anticipated all the carnage, manglings, and deaths along the way? Absolutely not — and there's still TWO more issues in this arc. So, buckle up, as Daniel and Jorge's BIGGEST surprises are about to rock your world.

-SEAN MACKIEWICZ, PUBLISHER



CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT

WHO: Elita-1

WHERE: Elita-1 is one of Optimus Prime's fiercest commanders. After Optimus departed Cybertron on the Ark, Elita-1 took command of the remaining Autobots, who've stood their ground in the face of overwhelming Decepticon forces.

WHAT: The outlook has been grim for the Autobots on Cybertron, but the recent destruction of Shockwave's command and the arrival of the new Autobot Shredhead has given Elita-1 hope that an in end to the war could be in sight.

TOP GUN

Did you know that Executive Editor Ben Abernathy is also an ace fighter pilot?

Well, WAS, until his death at the hands of Starscream. You should've been nicer to Dan and Jorge, Ben!!!

CREATOR SPOTLIGHT

Q: Jorge Corona, what would your alt-mode be?

A: Mine would be a hammock. I just want to sway in the wind.

THE ENERGON UNIVERSE CHECKLIST

- ☐ TRANSFORMERS #22 AVAILABLE 7/9
- ☐ G.I. JOE #9 AVAILABLE 7/16
- ☐ VOID RIVALS #21 AVAILABLE 7/23

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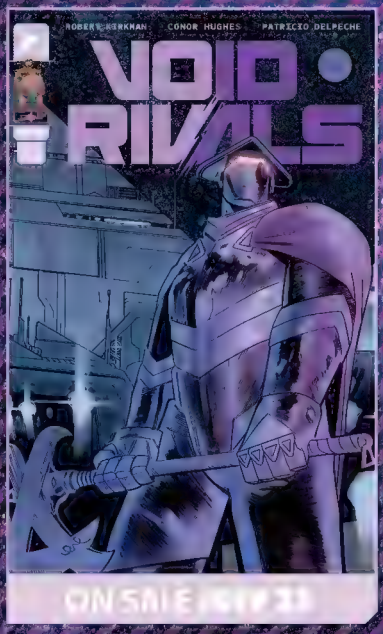

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THE UNRAVELLING OF A HORROR ICON FROM
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THE INVISIBLE MAN
OUT OF SIGHT... OUT OF HIS MIND!
ISSUE #1 APPEARS AUGUST 2025
DANI 2025
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THE LION'S HEAD
I THINK I'LL THROTTLE YOU.
I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT.

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PRESENT...
HE WAS ALL EATEN AWAY...

THE INVISIBLE MAN

CHAPTER ONE

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COVER B

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